## CITY OF ROCKVILLE PLANNING COMMISSION ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

MEETING NO. 17-2020

AGENDA ITEM NO. 1A
PUBLIC HEARING ON VOLUME II: PLANNING AREAS, OF
THE PLANNING COMMISSION'S DRAFT ROCKVILLE 2040
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

Wednesday, September 23, 2020

1	PARTICIPANTS:
2	Planning Commission:
3	CHARLES LITTLEFIELD, Chair
4	ANNE GOODMAN, Commissioner
5	SARAH MILLER, Commissioner
6	DON HADLEY, Commissioner
7	SUSAN PITMAN, Commissioner
8	JOHN TYNER, II, Commissioner
9	REV. JANE E. WOOD, Commissioner
10	Staff:
11	CLARK LARSON, Principal Planner
12	DAVID LEVY, Assistant Director of Planning
13	JIM WASILAK, Staff Liaison
14	ANDREA GILLES, Principal Planner
15	NICHOLAS DUMAIS, Assistant City Attorney
16	Speakers:
17	MIKE STEIN
18	BOB YOUNGENTOB
19	ROBERT HARRIS
20	DAVID DeMARCO
21	
22	MIKE DUTKA
	JIM POLICARO

1	PARTICIPANTS (CONT'D):
2	CATHERINE CONTRERAS
3	JANE PONTIUS
4	NOREEN BRYAN
5	PATRICIA WOODWARD
6	MARGARET MAGNER
7	DEBORAH LANDAU
8	LAUREN POVICH
9	JAIMIE MORRIS
10	JENNIFER TIMMICK
11	NICK JONES
12	KEVIN ZALETSKY
13	RHODA NDJOUKOUO
14	NANCY PICKARD
15	BRIAN SHIPLEY
16	HYUN KIM
17	CHRISTINE McGUIRL
18	PATRICK WOODWARD
19	
20	* * * *
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22	

- 1 PROCEEDINGS
- 2 CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: Good evening and
- 3 welcome everybody to the city of Rockville
- 4 Planning Commission meeting. This is our 17th
- 5 meeting of the year 2020, and it is being held
- 6 virtually via WebEx due to City Hall being closed
- on account of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic we're
- 8 all suffering.
- We only have one agenda item tonight.
- 10 And also, I should note there are six of seven
- commissioners present. We're short one
- commissioner this evening. But we only have one
- 13 agenda item this evening, and that is a public
- 14 hearing on our Draft Comprehensive Plan, Volume
- 15 II, which covers planning areas. This is the
- second of two hearings that the Planning
- 17 Commission is holding, and the previous hearing
- was already held on our last meeting, which was
- 19 September 9th, I believe. So, this is our second
- and final meeting virtually -- well, in general.
- 21 And just I'm going to start us off, I'm
- going to turn it over to staff to start us off on

- 1 this. However, I just have a few quick
- <sup>2</sup> announcements initially.
- So, one is that we, at last check, we
- 4 had 37 people registered, pre-registered, which is
- 5 a procedure for participating in this virtually,
- 6 which is quite a lot compared to our usual
- 7 meetings. I have heard that some people may have
- 8 potentially registered by mistake, that they just
- 9 wanted to listen into the meeting and not
- 10 necessarily give commentary. So, if that is the
- case, you can sign out and continue to watch
- either on regular TV or via stream via the city's
- website. But, in any case, if you do want to
- speak and you're signed up, that's the plan. So,
- 15 please feel free to participate in any case.
- I do want to say that we have slightly
- modified our usual procedures, not a lot, but
- 18 simply to account for the virtual nature of this.
- 19 And one thing about that is that we have limited
- of three minutes for every speaker. And that
- 21 actually is how we do it anyways. And five
- 22 minutes if you're representing a civic association

- or a similar entity.
- But I will say we're going to be very
- 3 strict with that limit. Our last public hearing
- 4 nobody went over by not even one second. And so
- <sup>5</sup> we are going to hold everybody to three minutes.
- 6 There will be a display on the screen so you can
- <sup>7</sup> tell how much time you have remaining. I do
- 8 apologize ahead of time. It's not that I want to
- 9 cut people off, but we do have a lot of speakers.
- 10 And even that aside, important, the main reason we
- have this rule is just to ensure fairness from one
- speaker to the next, so it's going to a
- three-minute limit or five if you're with an
- organization.
- In any case, the virtual testimony is
- just one way of communicating to us your thoughts
- and feelings on our draft plan. We also take
- written testimony and, in fact, even prefer it or
- encourage it, especially given the difficult times
- we're going through right now. And that can be
- 21 provided after tonight. We voted at our last
- meeting to keep the public record open until

- October 7th, close of business, I think 5 p.m. to
- 2 be precise. So, that gives anyone additional time
- 3 to provide further commentary in writing to us.
- 4 And you are not limited; if you speak tonight and
- 5 you want to give further commentary in writing,
- 6 you can. You can do that up until we close the
- <sup>7</sup> public record on it.
- 8 So, those are my initial comments.
- 9 Again, welcome and we're all looking forward to
- 10 hearing everybody's thoughts.
- So, with that, unless any other of my
- 12 fellow commissioners have any initial comments,
- 13 I'll turn it over to staff, city staff, to get us
- 14 started on this item and get the public hearing
- underway.
- MR. LARSON: Yes, thank you, Chairperson
- 17 Littlefield. This is Clark Larson. I'm a
- principal planner in the Planning and Development
- 19 Services Department. And I'm joined here with
- just part of the project team that's been working
- on bringing the Draft Comprehensive Plan to the
- Planning Commission for their consideration and

- deliberation over the past few years.
- I wanted to name a few others who are on
- 3 the call today: Andrea Gilles, David Levy, Jim
- 4 Wasilak, Larissa Klevan, Manisha Tewari, Nicholas
- 5 Dumais. And those are the staff I see. I think
- 6 everyone else who you might see pictures of on the
- <sup>7</sup> screen are either planning commissioners, who are
- 8 also important people, as well. But there's a lot
- 9 of other staff behind the scenes who have been
- working with us over the years, so I want to
- 11 recognize them, as well.
- So, I will start sharing my screen now
- $^{13}$  to provide a little more visual interest. And as
- 14 Chairperson Littlefield said, this is the public
- hearing to accept oral testimony, spoken
- 16 testimony, for the "Planning Areas" draft of the
- 17 Comprehensive Plan Update that we're working on.
- We've called it "Rockville 2040." And I'll get
- into a little bit more about the background and
- how we've been going through the process in the
- 21 next couple slides.
- Some milestones that we've hit and

- 1 expect to hit in the future. An initial staff
- <sup>2</sup> draft was reviewed by the Planning Commission of
- 3 December of last year through January. And this
- 4 was really the culmination of staff work behind
- 5 the scenes, but also working to speak with the
- 6 public and meet with the public in various groups
- <sup>7</sup> and settings to create the "Planning Areas" draft.
- 8 And the Planning Commission had some edits and
- 9 changes to the draft before they decided to
- release it to public review, and that happened in
- 11 February of 2020.
- 12 And it's been out on the street in
- various forms and venues since then. Although we
- 14 had some -- you'll see below, on the public
- hearing dates scheduled in May 2020, to have
- what's happening now happen back in May, so we had
- to, because of the COVID pandemic, reschedule
- those, figure out better ways to do outreach and
- get the word out about it, and figure out how to
- hold a virtual public hearing, as well.
- So, right now we are at the public
- hearing phase of the draft review, but we've been

- 1 accepting written testimony every since February.
- 2 So, the public record has been open since then
- and, as Commissioner Littlefield said, will be
- 4 open until October 7th.
- And then after that passes, we will be
- 6 moving into the work session phase with the
- 7 Planning Commission, reviewing all of the
- 8 testimony that was received on the "Planning
- 9 Areas" draft and any comments that we might have
- received on other portions of the Comp Plan. I'll
- talk in a minute about what's in Volume I. I
- think I will. If I don't, I'll bring it up later.
- But we expect to have work session
- 14 meetings in October, November, and December at
- 15 regular Planning Commission meetings. And at that
- 16 point, the Planning Commission may decided that
- the draft and both volumes for the elements for
- 18 citywide policies and the planning areas are in a
- 19 good enough format that they can vote to approve
- it for consideration by the Mayor and Council.
- 21 So, that is another step after this point where
- the Planning Commission really is the review

- 1 authority that initiates the Comprehensive Plan
- <sup>2</sup> updates and they send it on to Mayor and Council
- <sup>3</sup> for approval, ultimate approval.
- So, I don't know. I'm going to do a
- <sup>5</sup> quick -- yeah, I don't know if I talk about the
- 6 Volume I in these slides, but I will just briefly
- 7 mention that what we've termed "Volume I" are the
- 8 10 citywide elements. They have to do with
- <sup>9</sup> transportation, land use, housing, the
- 10 environment, water resources, and some other
- 11 topics. And they really have recommended policies
- 12 and actions to take that apply to the entire city,
- 13 citywide. These planning area policies and
- 14 recommendations are really specific chapters for
- each planning area, which is a neighborhood-based
- area, a neighborhood-scale area of a cluster of
- 17 neighborhoods, maybe some commercial areas. We
- think of them as really common areas of the city
- that have a similar character, have an affinity
- with each other.
- The boundaries really represent just
- that, just breaking it up for organizational sake.

- 1 They are treated equally as far as the land use
- 2 categories are pretty much the same across them,
- 3 but they're just kind of broken up in sort of
- 4 sections or chapters by planning area for the ease
- of being able to focus on what certain planning
- 6 areas might need over others. So, I think I've
- 7 covered some of that.
- 8 So, it includes in -- essentially each
- 9 planning area has area-specific policy changes.
- 10 It might be one property or a group of properties,
- zoning and design recommendations that would be
- considered during new developments or changes in
- land uses, potential city projects that might take
- 14 place in any one planning area, and other topics
- <sup>15</sup> for study.
- And I've had the website up here for a
- 17 little while. It's pretty easy to find if you
- want to find out any information or read the
- actual draft if you haven't yet. It's the city's
- website, rockvillemd.gov/Rockville-2040.
- A little bit about what we've been doing
- over this past year for public outreach. We've

- 1 gone through the official channels of sending
- letters and notifications to the State Department
- of Planning, surrounding jurisdictions, advertised
- 4 it in the paper. But we're really also tried to
- 5 leverage as much electronic outreach as we can,
- 6 email distribution lists, websites, the city's
- 7 Rockville Reports articles, social media. We
- 8 haven't been able to go out into the community as
- 9 much as we had hoped this year, although that has
- been happening over the entire Rockville 2040
- 11 process through initial conversations with a
- 12 number of -- essentially every neighborhood that
- we could contact, every planning area. So, this
- is really the public outreach that we've done this
- year, although we have been face-to-face with the
- 16 community in the past.
- So, as Commissioner Littlefield said,
- this tonight, the public hearing, is an
- opportunity oral testimony. It's not the only
- opportunity to provide comments and testimony to
- the Planning Commission. You can email them
- <sup>22</sup> directly at this address,

- 1 planning.commission@rockvillemd.gov, and the all
- <sup>2</sup> receive that at once. We also receive it and we
- 3 add it to the record that way.
- 4 You can online to our project website
- 5 and submit comments through an online forum. It's
- 6 really just name, address, topic, and you can type
- <sup>7</sup> in the comment field there. Or you can use the
- 8 old-school mail-in written testimony. We're still
- 9 checking mail at City Hall even though we have a
- skeleton crew there basically.
- All oral and written testimony will be
- made available to the Planning Commission during
- the work sessions. We'll be summarizing it and
- 14 sort of organizing it for discussion at that
- point, so it's al considered part of the public
- 16 record.
- So, the official part of my
- presentation, our recommendation is for the
- 19 Planning Commission to receive oral testimony on
- the Draft Plan tonight and confirm the work
- session dates that already have been discussed,
- 22 but just to have them be solidified as far as the

- 1 next few meetings for work sessions.
- So, with that, it starts the public
- 3 testimony period. And I'll stop sharing my
- 4 screen. I think it's going to come back to Bonita
- 5 (phonetic). And I think we'll just start going
- 6 down the list. It's basically in the order of
- <sup>7</sup> which we were contacted for public testimony.
- 8 CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: Thank you, Mr.
- 9 Larson. It looks like we're ready to proceed then
- with our public testimony. So, I have the list
- open and I will just state the name and address.
- We don't need to state it for the record because
- we already have it.
- So, number 1 is Mike Stein, 13004
- 15 Atlantic Avenue, in representation of Twinbrook
- 16 Community Association. Mike, are you online with
- 17 us?
- MR. STEIN: I am. Can you hear me?
- 19 CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: Yep. Welcome and
- 20 please proceed. You have five minutes as a civic
- 21 association representative.
- MR. STEIN: Thank you. Good evening,

- 1 Mr. Chair and fellow commissioners as noted. My
- 2 name is Mike Stein and I am speaking tonight as
- 3 president of the Twinbrook Community Association,
- 4 who wishes to thank you for this opportunity to
- 5 provide feedback to the Planning Commission on the
- 6 Draft Comprehensive Plan for the City of
- 7 Rockville. We have a longer written document we
- 8 will submit as written testimony, but tonight
- 9 we'll just be reading a few excerpts.
- Volume II, which represents Rockville's
- 11 planning areas, is a positive step forward in a
- 12 long-range plan to develop our beloved city. We
- especially want to thank city planning staff for
- their efforts over the last five years. City
- 15 staff have me with Twinbrook residents at least
- three times since 2015. According to Rockville
- 2040's website, this appears more than any other
- 18 planning area. We appreciate the outreach and
- think the plan accurately reflects the vision of
- the neighborhood shared by neighbors at the
- 21 meeting. TCA agrees with all of the
- recommendations in the plan for Planning Area 8,

- and we will specifically highlight those we find
- 2 most important and were commented on by neighbors
- 3 as part of our outreach.
- With regard to land use, housing, and
- 5 economic development, we applaud the inclusion of
- 6 the Twinbrook Metro Station area and the Veirs
- 7 Mill Corridor in the land use policy map to ensure
- 8 that Twinbrook residents have access to flexible
- <sup>9</sup> zoning arrangements that allow for growth and
- housing options. We think this is a smart and
- creative way to help address the city's and
- county's housing needs in the future, as well as
- support the Metro and the hopefully soon to be
- built Bus Rapid Transit along Veirs Mill Road.
- In particular, the residential-retail
- nodes highlighted in Areas 2 and 3 are responsive
- to the community's request to be a more walkable
- 18 neighborhood. The area around the Twinbrook Metro
- is an important one to our community. It connects
- us to the retail and services provided along
- 21 Rockville Pike. We support transit-oriented
- development that can connect the residential side

- of the track to the Pike in a meaningful way,
- <sup>2</sup> including a pedestrian-bike crossing. This will
- 3 also fulfill our shared goal of a truly walkable
- 4 city. Project 6 remains a top priority of the
- 5 neighborhood.
- 6 With regards to transportation, we look
- <sup>7</sup> forward to the possibility that the BRT will bring
- 8 for innovation, economic development, easing of
- <sup>9</sup> traffic congestion. We strongly support a BRT
- 10 station at Atlantic Avenue as well as the
- extension of Atlantic through to McAuliffe should
- the shopping center be developed.
- The extension of Lewis Avenue to Fishers
- 14 Lane is a project that has been raised many times
- over the decades. We understand it has been
- 16 controversial and there was limited support for it
- in the past. However, we believe the time has
- 18 come to implement this improvement. With the
- 19 recent and anticipated future development at
- Twinbrook Metro, it serves as another access point
- 21 for the neighborhood.
- We understand the concerns people have

- 1 using Lewis -- about people using Lewis Avenue as
- 2 a cut-through to avoid Rockville Pike. However,
- in this age of smartphones and navigation apps, we
- 4 believe that this cut-through traffic already
- occurs. People already use Lewis Avenue to get to
- 6 and from the Pike and Twinbrook Parkway. But
- 7 today that means a (technical inaudible) also been
- 8 a long-time request of residents.
- In the area of recreation and parks, we
- 10 encourage an investment in the Rockcrest Community
- 11 Center so that it may serve as a location for
- community meetings, programs, and sports. At a
- recent TCA membership meeting, support for Project
- 8 was specifically mentioned as a need.
- Rockville's ballet program is highly regarded and
- a strength of the city's recreation program.
- 17 Improvement and expanding in this facility would
- be a benefit not only to Twinbrook, but also the
- <sup>19</sup> city.
- And lastly tonight, I wanted to comment
- on some testimony you received from the Cambridge
- Walk HOA on September 9th. The TCA strongly

- 1 supports Cambridge Walk HOA's request to remain
- 2 part of Planning Area 8 rather than part of the
- 3 Rockville Pike Planning Area or Planning Area 9.
- 4 Although the townhome communities along Halpine
- 5 are represented by their own HOAs, they are and
- 6 historically have been part of the Twinbrook
- 7 community.
- 8 We share their general concern about the
- 9 potential redevelopment of the properties at 5906
- Halpine Road, the Twinbrook Community Church, and
- 11 5946 Halpine Road. TCA does not have a position
- 12 at this time on the appropriate zoning for these
- two properties. However, we do support townhomes,
- 14 a missing middle housing, at these locations. We
- are in contact with the Cambridge Walk HOA and are
- 16 committed to working together to find a solution
- that works for everyone. We believe that can best
- $^{18}$  be accomplished if we all remain part of the same
- <sup>19</sup> planning area.
- Thank you.
- 21 CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: Thank you for your
- 22 comments, Mr. Stein.

- 1 The next on my list is Bob Youngentob of
- 2 EYA, LLC, 4800 Hampton Lane, Bethesda. Bob, are
- you with us? Hello? Maybe you need to unmute.
- <sup>4</sup> Bob, are you connected?
- MR. YOUNGENTOB: There we go. Can you
- 6 hear me now?
- 7 CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: Yes, yes. Welcome.
- MR. YOUNGENTOB: I was trying to unmute.
- 9 CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: Loud and clear.
- MR. YOUNGENTOB: I apologize there, but
- 11 I was trying to unmute.
- 12 CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: No problem.
- Welcome. Go ahead.
- MR. YOUNGENTOB: Thank you, Chairman
- 15 Littlefield and members of the Commission. For
- the record, I'm Bob Youngentob I'm the CEO of EYA.
- While we're new to this process here tonight in
- the city, we're not new obviously to the City of
- 19 Rockville. As many of you know, we have been
- involved in numerous developments in the city over
- the years, including leading the development
- 22 effort at Falls Grove as well as under

- 1 construction today over at Tower Oaks.
- We are here tonight to speak about the
- 3 Rockshire site and specifically the
- 4 recommendations for the Rockshire property. I
- 5 have a couple of slide that Clark is going to
- 6 share for me. Maybe, Clark, if you could just
- $^7$  advance to the second -- yeah, go ahead. This
- gives by just shows the site itself, but going to the
- 9 second slide -- if you go to the next one --
- really just focused on one of the concerns that we
- 11 have in the language that speaks to the
- 12 requirement -- if you go back one -- to
- 13 substantial retail. And the idea that the
- 14 language I believe today says "substantial retail
- and/or a community gathering space."
- Having been involved in the development
- 17 at Park Potomac and Falls Grove, there is
- 18 substantial retail that has already been developed
- in this area. And if retail was possible, it
- likely would have already taken place on the
- 21 Rockshire site. We do not believe it's feasible
- for new retail to be built there and, therefore,

- would like the language changed or clarified so it
- takes away the "and" and provides language of
- <sup>3</sup> "substantial retail or a community gathering
- 4 space."
- If you go to the next slide, what we
- 6 believe is appropriate for this property, and
- <sup>7</sup> again we were brought into the site by the
- 8 landowners and are currently the contract
- <sup>9</sup> developer of the property, is primarily a
- 10 residential development with a community gathering
- space at the intersection of Hurley and Wooten
- 12 Parkway. We believe it is an appropriate location
- 13 for a significant community gathering space that
- could serve not only people using the bike path
- and the bike trails, but also the residents of the
- broader community.
- We believe that architecturally that the
- 18 development -- I know we're not here to talk about
- a development plan, but the development could, if
- you go to the next slide, reflect and be
- 21 compatible with the existing residential in the
- neighborhood. And these are some examples of

- 1 various townhome architectural styles that we have
- incorporated not only on the lower right at Falls
- 3 Grove, but also in downtown Silver Spring and
- 4 Arlington, and the lower left at Tower Oaks today.
- It's not a secret that housing demand is
- of critical importance in the city. The city has
- <sup>7</sup> endorsed the Council of Government study. There
- 8 is much talk in the plan about the need for
- 9 additional missing middle housing. We believe
- that townhomes are the appropriate use for this
- site and they will definitely be compatible with
- the adjoining townhomes, the community pool, the
- church, and the bordering streets.
- We do believe that this is a unique
- opportunity to take advantage of existing
- infrastructure where there is existing road
- 17 network, existing school capacity, existing
- utility capacity to build on an infill property
- with new missing middle housing. We're excited to
- 20 be selected by the landowner to be the developer
- of this property and we look forward to working
- with the community to address their concerns as

- 1 best we can.
- But, again, I think the language today
- provides too much ambiguity with regard to the
- 4 expectation for retail. And I think clarifying
- 5 that language will allow this development to move
- 6 forward. Unfortunately, the property obviously
- <sup>7</sup> has sat vacant for a number of years and we
- 8 believe this is a unique time and a unique
- 9 opportunity to actually see this solved, both for
- 10 economic development reasons, for the creation of
- 11 new missing middle housing, and also for the
- 12 addition of some new affordable housing in the
- form of the MPDUs that go along with the site.
- I don't see the timer on mine, so I
- assume that I'm out of time. But I'm available to
- answer any questions if there are any by the
- 17 commissioners.
- 18 CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: Thank you, Mr.
- 19 Youngentob. Commissioners, any questions?
- And yes, please feel free to share that
- with us in writing, as well, the slides you were
- 22 presenting.

- I would ask a favor of city staff. I
- 2 had a problem during the -- just now with my other
- monitor, so I don't have the participant list. I
- 4 know we're on participant number 3, so if somebody
- 5 has that open, if they could please ask the
- 6 participant to start. And I will fix my monitor.
- <sup>7</sup> I'm pretty sure it's fixable.
- 8 COMMISSIONER HADLEY: It's Robert
- 9 Harris.
- 10 CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: Pardon?
- 11 Commissioner Hadley, you have it?
- 12 COMMISSIONER HADLEY: It's Robert
- 13 Harris.
- 14 CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: Okay.
- 15 COMMISSIONER HADLEY: With (inaudible),
- 16 I believe.
- 17 CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: Mr. Harris, are you
- with us?
- MR. LARSON: Might be working on
- unmuting.
- 21 CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: Yeah. It takes some
- getting used to. Is he confirmed on, though, on

- 1 our list?
- MR. HARRIS: I'm 81. This is Bob
- 3 Harris. I was muted, I apologize.
- 4 CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: No problem.
- 5 MR. HARRIS: A common crime.
- 6 CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: It is. We're all
- <sup>7</sup> guilty of it. Welcome. Go ahead.
- MR. HARRIS: Thank you. For the record,
- 9 I'm Bob Harris and I wanted to speak briefly and
- also about the Rockshire Center, supporting the
- principles of the Draft Plan that staff has worked
- so hard on, but I want to clarify three issue.
- One is the retail, two is the community us, and
- the third one is parking on there.
- 15 As those of you who have lived any time
- in Rockville know, a lot has changed in the retail
- world since the Rockshire Shopping Center was
- built. And when it was built originally it worked
- well, but since then we've had a proliferation of
- retail around the area, from Falls Grove to
- 21 Travilah to Park Potomac to even the new shopping
- center on Research Boulevard, a new grocery store

- on Darnestown Road. And at the same time, what
- 2 has happened is big box retailers have eaten into
- 3 the normal retail that we were used to at the
- 4 time. So, retail is struggling throughout the
- 5 country and, you know, this center has been
- 6 closed. Giant left I think eight years ago and
- <sup>7</sup> the other retailers left soon after that.
- The owner of the property, whom I
- 9 represent, has tried diligently to find tenants
- there and just to no success. So, we have a
- concern about the language in the plan that calls
- 12 for substantial retail as an option. We just, in
- all honesty, do not believe it's a realistic
- option. We did provide the staff with a research
- 15 study that was done some time ago that amplifies
- 16 this.
- Secondly, it does talk about "or an
- 18 amenity," which makes some sense so long as
- expectations are realistic here. There has been
- talk by some in the community that they want to a
- new community center built there. Of course, a
- new one was built not long ago up at Thomas Farm

- that serves the west side of I-270 very well.
- 2 It's probably the biggest, best, and newest of the
- 3 community centers, and it's only about a mile and
- 4 a half away from the Rockshire area. We think
- 5 that meets the major community need.
- Rather, we think that what would serve
- <sup>7</sup> the community well would be more of an outdoor
- gathering space that would be consistent with the
- 9 Millennial Trail and what's going on in the
- 10 community around there. And I know that EYA is
- looking at ways in which to do that. So, we're
- 12 hoping that the Planning Commission will see that
- as a more viable option.
- Lastly, there's been some recent
- discussion about parking. The property today
- provides about 31 spaces for the Rockshire pool
- under an agreement that was entered many years
- 18 ago. The owners of the property have very
- intention of continuing to adhere to that
- agreement and will do so. We've already reached
- out to the community to talk about how that is
- done, but, at the same time, want to make it clear

- 1 that the property isn't --
- 2 CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: Mr. Harris. Sorry
- 3 to interrupt.
- 4 MR. HARRIS: Yes, sir.
- 5 CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: It's three minutes.
- 6 The three minutes are up and I apologize, but
- 7 please just finish your last sentence, if you
- 8 could.
- 9 MR. HARRIS: I was just going to say we
- can provide that parking, but I don't believe we
- would be able to provide more than that. Thank
- 12 you very much.
- 13 CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: Okay. Thank you.
- 14 And I have a question, if you don't mind, on some
- of your testimony.
- MR. HARRIS: Sure.
- 17 CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: And I was following
- along and taking notes, but on the retail, is it
- 19 your position that you are opposed to any retail?
- 20 And the circumstances as you explained them are
- 21 easily and readily understood, but would you be
- open to less or some retail or maybe even a

- different retail that looks different than the
- <sup>2</sup> current type of retail people usually talk about?
- MR. HARRIS: I certainly am opposed to
- 4 anything that would be considered significant
- 5 retail because I just think that has no
- 6 feasibility whatsoever. Minor retail, the problem
- 7 with that is that most small retailers rely on
- grocery anchors to bring in the tenants. And so
- 9 it is very difficult for one small retailer or two
- to function in an area like this, particularly
- where it's not on a major highway and not in the
- 12 middle of a central business district. So, I
- think work has to be done in terms of whether any
- 14 retail is really viable there.
- 15 CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: Okay. Thank you for
- that further clarification. Commissioners, any
- other questions or comments?
- No, okay. Thanks again.
- MR. HARRIS: Thank you very much.
- 20 CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: Yep. Our next
- 21 participant is Christine McGuirl from Federal
- 22 Realty Investment Trust, 909 Rose Avenue, North

- 1 Bethesda. Christine, are you with us? Please
- 2 check -- sorry, I see --
- BONITA: I'm sorry, (inaudible).
- 4 CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: Okay.
- 5 BONITA: David DeMarco should be next.
- 6 CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: Okay, I see that
- 7 now. Thanks, Bonita. So, David DeMarco, are you
- with us then from PulteGroup, 9302 Lee Highway,
- 9 Fairfax?
- MR. DeMARCO: Yes, I am.
- 11 CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: Okay. Welcome and
- 12 please go ahead. You have three minutes.
- MR. DeMARCO: My name's David DeMarco
- 14 and I'm vice president with Pulte Homes and I'm
- 15 testifying tonight as contract purchaser for the
- 16 Twinbrook Community Church property located at
- <sup>17</sup> 5906 Halpine Road.
- I think, as you may have heard, the
- 19 church is downsizing. They no longer need such a
- large facility. And while I understand they are
- looking for a new home in Twinbrook, they have
- 22 selected us to be contract purchaser for their

- 1 property.
- We are very excited about this
- 3 opportunity to bring some condominium housing
- 4 options closer to the Metro in Rockville. And
- we're really hoping to replicate the success we've
- 6 had in developing and building at the Tower Oaks
- 7 community (technical inaudible) Youngentob. As
- you may or not know, we have four condo buildings
- 9 there and all four of them are under construction.
- We're over halfway sold out and it's just been a
- tremendous success for us. And it really
- 12 identified what we all know, there's a tremendous
- 13 need for housing in the area.
- 14 And while there's a lot of rental
- communities, there's not a lot of individual
- 16 condominium ownership opportunities, especially
- with the type of product that we're proposing at
- 18 the Twinbrook site, which is the same exact
- condominiums that we're building at Tower Oaks.
- These units are larger. They're designed for
- downsizers. And I would tell you for 75 percent
- of our buyers are empty-nesters, which is, you

- 1 know, good because we don't have a lot of impact
- <sup>2</sup> on the school.
- And the reason our units attract the
- 4 empty-nester is because that they're large.
- 5 They're 1,550 square feet on average. And we
- 6 believe we can get two buildings at the 1-1/2 acre
- <sup>7</sup> site at Halpine (inaudible) and we're less than
- 8 one dozen feet from the Metro. And as the county
- 9 and city have just determined, there's a need for
- a thousand housing units by 2040, and we think we
- can help address the need. It'd be a good
- transition from the Avalon Apartments that are
- (inaudible). We are in support of the (inaudible)
- 14 residential land use designation and we urge the
- 15 Planning Commission support the MXNC zone, which
- would allow for this modestly (inaudible) family
- project, which I know it's smaller, but we had
- 18 fewer units, but they're bigger and better as I
- 19 like to refer to them.
- We recognize the need for compatibility
- 21 and we're, you know, happy to go with -- meet with
- the county and city staff and look at different

- avenues we can do to address that. The MXNC
- 2 provision regarding setbacks is inconsistent with
- 3 the Comp Plan recommendation and we would like to
- 4 see a one-foot setback for each one foot in height
- 5 instead of one-foot setback for every two feet in
- 6 height. We would agree to a minimum setback of 30
- <sup>7</sup> feet.
- 8 We look forward to working with the
- 9 staff. I will submit my testimony for the record.
- 10 I appreciate your time tonight and thank you very
- 11 much. If you have any questions, let me know.
- 12 CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: Thank you, Mr.
- 13 DeMarco. Commissioners, any questions?
- No, okay. Thanks again, appreciate it.
- The next person on my list is Mike Dutka of 713
- 16 Shetland Street, Rockville.
- MR. DUTKA: Hello. Can you hear me?
- 18 CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: Yep.
- MR. DUTKA: Okay.
- 20 CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: Welcome. Please
- 21 proceed. You have three minutes.
- MR. DUTKA: Yeah. I'm speaking as an

- individual and a self-described YIMBY or a "yes,
- in my backyard" person. I'm also speaking as a
- 3 lifelong resident of the City of Rockville. I
- 4 grew up in College Gardens. I think that's
- 5 Planning Area 4. And I just want to say, you
- 6 know, when my parents bought their house there, it
- year was worth \$125,000. Inflation adjusted, that's
- 8 \$330,000 today. What their home is actually worth
- 9 now is \$680,000, so more than double.
- And the reason for this is because we
- simply have not built enough housing in Rockville.
- We need to go much further. We need to be very
- ambitious with up-zoning. Missing middle homes
- 14 are a great creative solution. I applaud what the
- 15 Comprehensive Plan is looking at doing there. But
- 16 I think it needs to be pushed further. I think
- densities needs to be pushed further when we have
- 18 Metro stations.
- So, yeah, I think as the Planning
- 20 Commission, you know what needs to be done. You
- need to give a good, strong starting point to the
- 22 Council and then the Council, as the elected

- officials, can decide what they need to do based
- on what the constituents are willing to accept.
- So, that's the end of my testimony.
- 4 CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: Okay. Thank you
- <sup>5</sup> very much, Mr. Dutka. Much appreciated.
- I guess we will go to our next speaker.
- 7 And on my list that is Maya Gothman (phonetic) of
- 8 23 Ridgefield Court, Rockville. Maya, are you
- 9 online?
- SPEAKER: I think she's not here.
- 11 CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: Sorry, I see that
- 12 always a second after you guys. So, next on my
- list is Jim Policaro with Lerner Companies, 2000
- 14 Tower Oaks Boulevard, Rockville. Jim, are you
- <sup>15</sup> with us?
- MR. POLICARO: I'm here. Can you hear
- 17 me?
- 18 CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: Yep. Welcome and
- 19 please proceed. You have three minutes.
- MR. POLICARO: Thank you.
- 21 CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: You're welcome.
- MR. POLICARO: Good evening. My name is

- Jim Policaro, senior vice president of development
- for Lerner Enterprises. Lerner has been
- developing at Falls Grove for the past 15 years,
- 4 including Falls Grove Village Retail Center,
- 5 Hilton Garden Inn and Homewood Suites, and Falls
- 6 Grove Plaza medical office building.
- Our (technical inaudible) the Planning
- 8 Commission this past spring for the development of
- 9 a multi-family community of 350 market-rate units.
- 10 The project appeared to be well received. In
- June, we made a similar presentation to the Mayor
- 12 and Council and, again, the project appeared to be
- 13 viewed favorably.
- The property is part of the Falls Grove
- 15 Comprehensive Plan development and thus is zoned
- 16 PD-FG. The Comprehensive Plan appropriately
- designates the property as OR-RN, which is
- intended as the most flexible mixed-use category,
- allowing for property owners a wide choice in
- <sup>20</sup> mixed office, retail, and residential uses. We
- 21 concur with this recommendation.
- The Comprehensive Plan also designates

- the property with retail frontage along its west
- 2 -- with retail frontage along its west grading --
- <sup>3</sup> frontage and along the northern half of Research
- 4 Boulevard frontage. This designation would
- <sup>5</sup> require retail at this location. We do not agree
- 6 with this recommendation and request that this
- <sup>7</sup> designation be eliminated.
- While we had concerns about this retail
- 9 designation initially, well in advance of the
- 10 COVID-19 pandemic, our concerns over the retail
- 11 requirement have increased significantly given the
- pandemic's acute impact on the retail market. In
- requesting that the retail designation be
- eliminated we note the following.
- The retail market is struggling even in
- 16 established areas. It is self-defeating to
- 17 require that additional retail be added in future
- 18 developments. Requiring retail likely will result
- in vacant ground floor space. This is not
- beneficial to the project, surrounding property
- owners, or the city as a whole.
- There is also a major gas line easement

- which is across the entire northern frontage of
- the property at Guide Drive. Therefore, a retail
- 3 along Research Boulevard cannot be located on the
- 4 main corner of this site. This severely limits
- 5 the opportunity for a successful retail
- 6 establishment.
- 7 For the reasons identified, we
- 8 respectfully request that you request the retail
- 9 requirements designation in the Comprehensive
- 10 Plan. Thank you.
- 11 CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: Thank you very much
- 12 for your comments, Mr. Policaro. Much
- 13 appreciated.
- MR. POLICARO: You're welcome.
- 15 CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: Thank you. The next
- person on my list is Catherine Contreras of 404
- 17 Ridge Point Place, Gaithersburg. Catherine, are
- 18 you there?
- MS. CONTRERAS: Hi.
- 20 CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: Hi. Welcome.
- MS. CONTRERAS: So, hi. My name is
- 22 Catherine Contreras and I'm a senior at Thomas S.

- 1 Wootton High School -- I am actively involved in
- 2 clubs like Best Buddies and sports like bocce and
- 3 handball.
- When I'm not participating in club
- 5 activities or practices for sports, I am
- 6 advocating for the Americans With Disabilities Act
- $^{7}$  building compliance. And I tend to have off-
- 8 campus advocacy meetings that I attend and which
- 9 is why parking at Rockshire is a necessity for me
- and other Wootton students.
- Current and future Wootton students need
- 12 Rockshire for parking and it's important that we
- 13 recognize the needs of thousands of students.
- 14 Thank you.
- 15 CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: Thank you very much,
- 16 Ms. Contreras, for your comments.
- Next on my list is Christopher Yea
- 18 (phonetic), if I'm pronouncing that correctly,
- 19 1411 Girard Street, Rockville. Christopher, are
- you online? Are you with us?
- SPEAKER: Christopher is not present.
- 22 CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: Not present, okay.

- 1 Then I will go to the next person, which is Jane
- Pontius, 127 South Van Buren Street, Rockville.
- <sup>3</sup> Jane, are you with us?
- MS. PONTIUS: Yes, I am.
- 5 CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: Welcome. Please
- 6 proceed. You have three minutes.
- 7 MS. PONTIUS: I'm providing testimony on
- 8 behalf of the Planning Area 4 Committee regarding
- <sup>9</sup> the Neighborhood Plan. I live at 127 South Van
- Buren Street and in 1975, my husband John and I
- moved to this house where he and his brothers had
- 12 lived since 1952. We raised both of our sons in
- this home. And in 2010, my son subsequently
- 14 bought the former Oxley (phonetic) home across the
- 15 street. I'm presenting my testimony on behalf of
- my family's longstanding ties to the West End of
- 17 Rockville.
- I wish to express my support of the plan
- with the exception of the following key issues
- which remain: Too many and too large
- institutions, preservation of the land which
- 22 surrounds historic structures, freestanding

- 1 accessory dwelling units. The 2016 WECA survey of
- 2 its residents indicated that the citizens do not
- want commercial, office, or institutional uses
- 4 within the confines of the West End neighborhood.
- 5 Neither excessive commercial or office uses are
- 6 permitted due to current zoning laws. However,
- <sup>7</sup> institutional usage is handled by the special
- 8 exception process, which can lead to the
- 9 destruction of neighborhoods one institutional
- 10 project at a time.
- I request that the city staff provide
- more explicit procedures for granting such uses.
- 13 This type of change inevitably results in more
- traffic, congestion, and parking demands, all of
- which disrupt and interfere with the residential
- 16 character of the neighborhood.
- The preservation of the land surrounding
- historical buildings is also an important
- component to the planning process. It is not
- 20 enough to preserve the buildings alone, but also
- the surrounding open spaces and landscaping
- 22 contribute to the rich historical significance of

- 1 the site. I suggest that city staff adopt more
- 2 specific language to preserve landscaping,
- grounds, and setting of historic districts. Once
- 4 that land is subdivided, there is no turning back.
- 5 Finally, allowing separate, standalone,
- 6 accessory dwelling units in the West End of
- 7 Rockville will greatly threaten the historic
- 8 character of the neighborhood. The number of
- 9 separate residential structures on a lot must be
- 10 limited to one. A process for reviewing
- 11 applications for attached accessory apartments
- needs to be created to protect the residential
- character of a neighborhood. A special exception
- 14 application for this type of structure needs to be
- 15 formulated to provide neighbors the opportunity to
- 16 comment and review the application.
- 17 Thank you for this opportunity.
- 18 CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: Thank you, Ms.
- 19 Pontius. Much appreciate your comments.
- The next person that I have is Noreen
- 21 Bryan, who will be speaking on behalf of the West
- 22 End Citizens Association. Noreen, are you with

- 1 us?
- MS. BRYAN: Hi. I think I'm here. I
- <sup>3</sup> just succeeded on unmuting.
- 4 CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: We can hear you.
- MS. BRYAN: Okay, good. Thank you.
- 6 CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: You're welcome. You
- <sup>7</sup> have five minutes.
- MS. BRYAN: Thank you much. Tonight
- <sup>9</sup> I'll be speaking relative to the Planning Area 4
- Neighborhood Plan as one of the co-chairs of the
- 11 community committee. I would like to -- there
- will be five speakers for the committee; four of
- them will follow me.
- My foremost message tonight is to thank
- everyone who has helped us to update the plan.
- 16 The process began five years ago. For the first
- two years, the community worked on its own --
- 18 Clark, we don't need that photo yet, please; thank
- 19 you -- surveilling all households and drafting
- initial updates of the 1981 plan. Thereafter our
- committee and city staff spent nearly two years in
- biweekly meetings honing the details. Throughout,

- 1 residents had many opportunities to participate.
- The result is the plan that you have
- before you, one that we fully support. Thank you,
- 4 thank you to everyone, staff and neighbors, who
- 5 have given so many evenings to make this possible.
- 6 Of the dozens of topics that the
- 7 community and staff initially viewed differently,
- 8 all have been resolved except for the three
- 9 remaining issues mentioned by Jane Pontius. I
- will address each briefly and then also testify
- after and we will explain them more fully.
- We're passionate about these issues
- because we believe that additional policy is
- 14 essential to preserve the residential character of
- 15 Planning Area 4 and prevent transition to a
- hodgepodge of uses and loss of single-family
- houses.
- Preserving our residential neighborhood
- was the value expressed most often by respondents
- to the neighborhood survey. We need your help to
- 21 add policies that ensure the neighborhood will not
- $^{22}$  be eroded.

- 1 It is essential to recognize that
- 2 Rockville neighborhoods are not governed equally.
- 3 Since the 1970s, most new neighborhoods were
- 4 created as self-contained entities with their own
- 5 rule and governing homeowners associations. They
- 6 operate with covenants more restrictive than
- <sup>7</sup> citywide zoning policies.
- 8 Most HOAs prevent commercial uses,
- 9 office, and institutions, preventing cut-through
- traffic and (inaudible) accessory dwelling units.
- 11 Today it appears that 50 percent or more of the
- 12 residential properties in Rockville are contained
- in HOAs, such King Farm, New Mark Commons, Rose
- Hill, Rose Hill Falls, et cetera. Only a small
- group of the oldest communities in Rockville are
- left without the protection afforded to HOAs.
- 17 Planning Area 4 is particularly vulnerable because
- of its location between I-270 and Town Center.
- 19 Further, it bears the burden of more cut-through
- traffic than any other neighborhood in the city.
- Here are the issues. Institutions, more
- than 80 percent of the respondents to the

- 1 neighborhood survey oppose having commercial,
- office, or institutional uses replace residences.
- 3 There's protection provided in the zoning
- 4 ordinance against excessive commercial and office
- <sup>5</sup> uses. Institutions, as Jane mentioned, are
- 6 different. They come into the neighborhood one at
- 7 a time; there's no limit on how many or where they
- 8 can be located.
- 9 When looked at individually, nearly all
- institutions appear desirable. However, in
- 11 aggregate, to many institutions, particularly
- those that are large and consume many residential
- 13 lots, destroy the character of a residential
- 14 neighborhood.
- Secondly, preserving the open land
- around historical structures, we believe that to
- preserve Rockville's history, it is essential to
- preserve the land and setting, not just the
- buildings themselves. Policy is needed to clearly
- state the neighborhood's vision of preserving the
- 21 areas of open space in historic districts.
- National and local standards are not

- 1 sufficient. Too many historic structures in D.C.
- and nearby Bethesda stand only a few feet from
- giant high-rise buildings. We don't want that to
- 4 happen here. And looking at the current special
- 5 exceptions, there are many buildings that are
- 6 allowed therein to get to be 50 feet high. That
- 7 could be close to double all those little Cape Cod
- 8 houses in the neighborhood.
- 9 Freestanding accessor dwelling units,
- most of the land in Planning Area 4, is composed
- of single-family detached housings. Respondents
- who participated stated overwhelmingly that they
- want to preserve the neighborhood as it exists
- 14 today. If freestanding ADUs are allowed, two, not
- one, dwelling unit per lot will be allowable and
- single-family housing will be a thing of the past.
- The protections that we are requesting
- do not come close to those afforded HOAs. For
- example, we are not actively excluding
- institutions outright. We are asking to put caps
- with (inaudible) size. We hope that you'll
- embrace these steps towards equalizing protections

- 1 for all neighborhoods.
- Thank you so much for your service and
- your consideration. And again, thank you to
- 4 everyone how has participated in the update of the
- 5 plans.
- I can't see the timer, so I don't know
- <sup>7</sup> where we are.
- 8 CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: I think it's good
- <sup>9</sup> timing, you just made it.
- MS. BRYAN: Okay.
- 11 CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: Thank you, Ms.
- 12 Bryan, for your comments.
- MS. BRYAN: Charles, may I ask one more
- 14 thing? Patrick Woodward is the fifth speaker here
- and he may be late to this. If he arrives late,
- is it possible for him to join?
- 17 CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: Yeah, I would
- 18 coordinate that with Bonita, who's online, but we
- will -- yeah. We also ask at the end if there's
- 20 people who haven't, there may be others, but I
- 21 would ask to coordinate that with Bonita because I
- don't handle the technical part, but thanks for

- 1 letting us know.
- MS. BRYAN: Thank you.
- 3 CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: Yep. The next
- 4 person I have is Kevin Zaletsky. Kevin, are you
- 5 with us? Can you hear? Hello?
- No. Kevin, are you unmuted?
- 7 SPEAKER: (inaudible) unmuted, Kevin.
- 8 SPEAKER: He may be having technical
- <sup>9</sup> difficulty.
- 10 CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: I'll give him
- another second or two. Hello?
- Okay. I am going to go to the next
- person on the list, who is Patricia Woodward of
- 14 111 North Van Buren, Rockville. Patricia?
- MS. WOODWARD: Good evening.
- 16 CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: Good evening.
- Welcome.
- MS. WOODWARD: Thank you.
- 19 CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: You have three
- <sup>20</sup> minutes. Go ahead.
- MS. WOODWARD: Good evening. I'm
- Patricia Woodward. I live on North Buren Street

- 1 here in the historical West End. The need for the
- Neighborhood Plan and the need to include policy
- 3 to preserve the settings and landscaping of
- 4 historic districts thereby preventing overbuilding
- of new structures and the loss of land surrounding
- 6 the historic structures. Planning Area 4 is one
- of the oldest neighborhoods in Rockville and has
- 8 more historic districts than any other. They are
- 9 highly valued by the community.
- Buildings all by themselves do not tell
- a site's history. They must be seen in the
- 12 context of the surrounding -- the land surrounding
- them. For the 19th and much of the 20th century,
- we all know that Rockville had surrounding
- 15 countryside, large farms, vast rolling cropland
- and pastures. Closer to town, the homes and
- community buildings, such as Rockville Academy,
- 18 Chestnut Lodge of which I worked there from 1964
- until July of 1975, and the Beale-Dawson House
- were surrounded with sweeping lawns, dotted with
- 21 magnificent oaks and chestnuts. They demonstrate
- how these schools and hotels, et cetera, worked.

- 1 Historic buildings sandwiched between
- 2 giant structures have become the norm locally and
- <sup>3</sup> nationally. We've all experienced walking in city
- 4 streets, coming upon a little church or an old
- 5 post office that is lost between 30- and 40- story
- 6 buildings. Nothing is left of the original
- <sup>7</sup> setting except two pieces of lawn maybe on each
- 8 side of the building. This is so, so sad.
- The history has been relegated to
- 10 architecture and historic markers. We don't want
- this to happen in Area 4. We want future
- 12 residents and visitors to have an accurate vision
- of the history of these districts and how they
- 14 fill and it into the community. Without their
- landscape history, historic structures are
- severely diminished and compromised.
- Most of our significant historic
- districts have already been reduced significantly.
- 19 Chestnut Lodge once owned 140 acres of land; when
- 20 I worked there it was 100. The Beall- Dawson
- House was the center of a large plantation.
- However, we are very fortunate that we have

- 1 Chestnut Lodge and Rockville Academy and the
- 2 Beall-Dawson House where some of the lands and so
- <sup>3</sup> forth were preserved.
- 4 However, without policy in the
- 5 Neighborhood Plan it's highly likely that these
- open spaces and landscapes still could be lost or
- <sup>7</sup> greatly diminished. The historic national, state,
- 8 and local standards do not protect the --
- 9 CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: Ms. Woodward, I'm
- sorry, three minutes is up. Please finish that
- last sentence, though.
- MS. WOODWARD: Oh, okay, thank you very
- much. Only then can we preserve our history if we
- $^{14}$  go with what we ask. The committee is --
- 15 CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: Okay, that's good.
- MS. WOODWARD: Thank you very much for
- 17 listening.
- 18 CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: Thank you. And
- <sup>19</sup> apologies for --
- MS. WOODWARD: And we look forward to --
- 21 CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: Yep. Thank you very
- 22 much.

- MS. WOODWARD: Goodnight.
- 2 CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: Yep. Take care and
- 3 sorry we have to have a limit, but we have to
- 4 stick to it.
- 5 The next person on my list is Margaret
- 6 Magner.
- 7 MS. MAGNER: Hi. Did I successfully
- 8 unmute?
- 9 CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: Yes.
- MS. MAGNER: Excellent.
- 11 CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: You did and we can
- 12 hear you very well.
- MS. MAGNER: Thank you.
- 14 CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: Welcome and go
- 15 ahead. You have three minutes.
- MS. MAGNER: Thank you.
- 17 CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: Yep.
- MS. MAGNER: My testimony addresses the
- need to include policy on accessory dwelling units
- in the Planning Area 4 Neighborhood Plan.
- 21 Planning Area 4 is composed primarily of
- single-family residences. The Neighborhood Plan

- 1 survey shows that PA 4 residents desire above all
- <sup>2</sup> to preserve the composition of the neighborhood.
- 3 This value is a guiding principle of the PA 4
- 4 plan.
- 5 To achieve this, policy needs to be
- 6 added to the plan setting standards on ADUs.
- 7 Citywide policy as expressed in Volume I of the
- 8 Comprehensive Plan does not apply to neighborhoods
- 9 governed by HOAs, which is 50 percent or more of
- the residential land in Rockville. ADU policy
- that is allegedly citywide actually targets only a
- 12 handful of neighborhoods. These are Planning Area
- 4 and the other older neighborhoods with deep
- 14 backyards.
- 15 Each of these neighborhoods deserves to
- have its own ADU policies that sustain it's unique
- characteristics and community values. Here is why
- 18 ADU policy is needed for Planning Area 4
- 19 (technical inaudible) often becomes a rented
- apartment or an Airbnb when the property changes
- hands and new owners move into a main house. The
- 22 substantial backyards of PA 4 will be gone if

- 1 second dwellings are built there, resulting in the
- 2 removal of a large percentage of the mature trees
- in the neighborhood, the degradation of the
- 4 ecology, elimination of habitat for birds and
- wildlife, and destruction of the park-like quality
- 6 of PA 4.
- Allowing a second house per lot would
- 8 further incentivize tear-down and mansionization
- 9 as developers seek to maximize profits with two
- 10 houses on one lot. This would destroy rather than
- preserve the range of housing we have in PA 4,
- which has many small houses built after World War
- 13 II.
- 14 Providing affordable housing through
- 15 ADUs in PA 4 is a myth. Property owners would
- seek to maximize the return from a freestanding
- 17 ADU. Our initial investigation indicates that the
- 18 rental rates would be out of the range of
- 19 affordable housing. Allowing accessory apartments
- in existing residences or in addition would be
- 21 beneficial, as long as there are standards to
- 22 preserve the single-family character of PA 4

- streets and keep them from being overburdened with
- <sup>2</sup> parked cars.
- We have prepared draft policy language
- 4 on ADUs that we recommend for inclusion in the PA
- <sup>5</sup> 4 plan. We hope that you will support the need
- 6 for this policy. It is essential for our
- 7 neighborhood to continue as the community of
- 8 single-family homes and green park-like spaces
- <sup>9</sup> that our residents have strongly stated they wish
- 10 to maintain.
- 11 Thank you for your dedication and your
- willingness to hear and support the citizens who
- 13 live in PA 4.
- 14 CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: Thank you, Ms.
- Magner, for your testimony. Much appreciated.
- We have some pre-registered speakers,
- four in a row, I guess, that are not on mine. So,
- 18 I think that the next person on the list is
- Deborah Landau. Deborah, are you online? Are you
- with us?
- MS. LANDAU: I am. Can you hear me?
- 22 CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: Yep. Welcome.

- MS. LANDAU: Thank you so much and good
- <sup>2</sup> evening.
- 3 CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: Good evening. You
- 4 have five minutes. You're here for ERCA, correct?
- MS. LANDAU: Erica? Oh, ERCA, yeah,
- 6 sorry.
- 7 CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: ERCA, sorry.
- MS. LANDAU: Yes.
- 9 CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: East Rockville Civic
- 10 Association.
- MS. LANDAU: Correct, and thank you for
- the introduction. I am indeed the president of
- the East Rockville Civic Association. And I'm
- 14 here to provide our comments and feedback on this
- <sup>15</sup> 2040 Comprehensive Draft Plan.
- We very much appreciate all the work the
- city has done to prepare this Comprehensive Plan
- $^{18}$  and the efforts by the city staff to give us
- opportunities to understand its contents. We also
- very much appreciate the changes that were made to
- this draft plan reflecting our comments on the
- 22 previous version. Thank you.

- In general, ERCA supports the new
- <sup>2</sup> residential attached zoning in East Rockville with
- 3 the following exceptions. ERCA does not support
- 4 the RA zone stretching down one full block into
- 5 Reading Terrace, Highland Avenue, Croydon Avenue,
- 6 and on the corner of 1st Street and Veirs Mill.
- <sup>7</sup> ERCA instead would support the RA zone change
- 8 reaching down two or three lots from South
- 9 Stonestreet Avenue, but no further.
- 10 It should be explicitly stated in the
- 11 plan that the East Rockville design guidelines
- currently under development will apply to this new
- 13 RA zone. We've worked really hard with the city
- and are very, very excited about these guidelines
- and we hope that they will be kept.
- Specifically in the plan, under the
- Urban Design section on page 23, Area 5, the
- 18 fourth bullet under "Neighborhood Content" says,
- 19 "Mature trees and tree canopy should be
- 20 prioritized and preserved." We feel very strongly
- that this needs to be a must. Mature trees and
- tree canopy must be prioritized and preserved.

- 1 And this doesn't mean replacing them with
- <sup>2</sup> seedlings.
- Moving down under "Building Form" on the
- 4 same page, the first bullet says, "New residential
- 5 attached buildings should be proportional in
- 6 height, mass, and scale with adjacent homes."
- <sup>7</sup> This also needs to be a must. New residential
- 8 attached buildings must be proportional in height,
- 9 mass, and scale with adjacent homes.
- Next bullet, "When adjacent to a lower
- 11 scaled structure, a graduate transition should be
- utilized." Again, this needs to be a must, a
- gradual transition must be utilized.
- And finally, the third point, "Side
- 15 elevations should include windows of consistent
- proportion and placement as the front elevation
- and large, blank walls should be avoided." Large,
- 18 blank walls must be avoided.
- 19 I would also encourage the Planning
- 20 Commission to make sure that they read previous
- 21 comments from the earlier drafts, many of which I
- think would still be relevant to this version.

- And that's all I've got. Thank you so
- 2 much for your time and consideration on this
- 3 really impressive Comprehensive Plan.
- 4 CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: Thank you very much,
- 5 Ms. Landau, for your comments. Much appreciate
- 6 that.
- 7 Let's see, the next person on my list is
- 8 Lauren Povich of 331 --
- 9 MS. POVICH: Okay, that's another
- 10 (inaudible) I can get it.
- 11 CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: Hello?
- MS. POVICH: Oh, hello?
- 13 CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: Hello. Hi. Is this
- 14 Lauren Povich?
- MS. POVICH: I'm a Wootton student. I'm
- 16 a sophomore and I was -- I would like to advocate
- for the Rockshire parking to be open for us
- because a lot of us need parking. And me,
- 19 specifically, I'm on the field hockey team and I
- just am a part of these few clubs. And after
- 21 school, a lot of the times the activity bus
- doesn't come at the same times, so a lot of us

- 1 need to, like, park and be able to get home. And
- 2 I know that a lot of people who have parents that
- 3 are divorced are -- don't have a bus location at
- 4 one of their houses, so they need to be able to
- <sup>5</sup> drive.
- Thank you.
- 7 CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: Thank you very much
- 8 for providing your comments on the parking.
- 9 Let's see, the next on my list is
- Jasmine Gong (phonetic) of 11638 Pleasant Meadow,
- North Potomac. Jasmine, are you online? Can you
- 12 hear us?
- MR. LARSON: Okay, per Bonita's messages
- 14 \_\_
- 15 CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: Oh, sorry.
- MR. LARSON: -- she and Marilyn
- 17 (phonetic) may not be present. Jaimie Morris?
- 18 CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: I keep missing
- 19 those. Too many things on my screen at once, two
- 20 screens.
- MR. LARSON: I'm here for you.
- CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: You're helping me.

- Okay, so, next speaker then will be Jaimie Morris
- 2 of --
- MS. MORRIS: Hi.
- 4 CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: -- 14004 Natia Manor
- 5 in North Potomac. Jaimie, can you hear us?
- 6 MS. MORRIS: Yes. Can you hear me?
- 7 CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: Yep, we can. Please
- 8 proceed. You have three minutes to provide us
- 9 with your comments.
- MS. MORRIS: Thank you.
- 11 CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: You're welcome.
- MS. MORRIS: Hi. I'm Jaimie Morris and
- 13 I'm testifying on behalf of the hundreds of
- students at Wootton that wish to have parking.
- 15 I'm a junior at Wootton High School and I'm also
- on the Wootton Cheer Team and being a student
- athlete I stay after school a lot and for meetings
- 18 and practices. And also on behalf of the other
- students, I know that they want the opportunity to
- stay after for clubs and school help.
- There are not enough parking spots in
- the lot for every licensed student to have a spot.

- 1 And also, I know that all the spots are dedicated
- to the students, so when parents need to pick up
- 3 students there aren't spots for them to park. So,
- 4 Rockshire, the parking there is very much
- <sup>5</sup> appreciated.
- I just would like you guys to take into
- 7 consideration the student parking at Rockshire for
- 8 now and for the future when planning this out.
- <sup>9</sup> So, thank you.
- 10 CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: Thank you very much,
- Jaimie, for your comments on our plan.
- 12 The next speaker that I have -- there's
- actually two, so I would ask staff id there's a
- 14 clarification on this or if there are two -- if it
- should be two separate people speaking. But it's
- 16 Victor Hernandez (phonetic) and Petra Grunveldt
- 17 (phonetic). Are we having two people or is this
- just one or the other?
- SPEAKER: I'm sorry, they're not online.
- Jennifer Timmick is next.
- CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: Okay, the next two.
- 22 All right. Jennifer Timmick of 4 West Argyle

- 1 Street. Jennifer, are you online? Can you hear
- $^2$  us?
- MS. TIMMICK: Yes, I am.
- 4 CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: Hi. Welcome.
- 5 MS. TIMMICK: Can you --
- 6 CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: Yep, we can. Please
- <sup>7</sup> go ahead.
- MS. TIMMICK: Thank you, I'm glad to.
- 9 CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: You have three
- <sup>10</sup> minutes.
- MS. TIMMICK: I have been a part of the
- 12 Committee of Residents working on the update for
- 13 Planning Area 4 since December 2015. I wanted to
- take a moment to acknowledge some of the people on
- this committee who've put an amazing amount of
- work and time into preparing a draft of the
- planning area, from creating and implementing the
- 18 survey to compiling the results, then writing a
- 19 completely new planning areas draft, presenting
- that to neighbors, and revising it based on their
- 21 input.
- The committee co-chairs are Judge

- 1 Patrick Woodward and Ms. Noreen Bryan. Other
- 2 members of the committee who worked on this
- 3 project include Dennis Kane, Warren Crutchfield,
- 4 may he rest in peace, Eric Fulton, Jack Jellen
- <sup>5</sup> (phonetic), Larry Giammo, Nancy Pickard, Ken
- 6 Sonner, Patricia Woodward, and Kevin Zaletsky. I
- 7 am honored to have worked with such a dedicated
- 8 and smart group of people.
- 9 This committee completed a draft of
- 10 Planning Area 4 and submitted it to city staff in
- December 2017. Starting the next spring, we began
- to meet with members of city staff for about an
- hour and a half to two hours every two weeks.
- 14 During these meetings we discussed in detail all
- the topics, elements, issues, policies,
- 16 recommendations, everything.
- Over the next year and a half, committee
- members and city staff managed to come together
- and agree on nearly all of the draft that you have
- now for Planning Area 4. There were only a few
- 21 areas where we still disagree.
- While many different staff members

- 1 attended our meetings at times, we worked mostly
- 2 closely with Cindy Kebba and Dave Levy, who were
- 3 there almost every other week. Cindy and Dave
- 4 were always professional. They were willing to
- 5 work hard. They listened to our ideas, discussed
- 6 differing opinions, did research, came back with
- <sup>7</sup> answers, and made some compromises. I am very
- grateful for the many, many hours both Cindy and
- 9 Dave devoted to our planning area and for their
- willingness to work with us to produce a draft
- that clearly states the desires of planning areas
- 12 residents.
- One area that's still difficult is the
- 14 section regarding institutional uses. Planning
- Area 4 residents do not want to see the expansion
- of large institutions in their neighborhood and
- the plan you have should protect them from that.
- On page 46 of this draft, the fourth
- bullet under "Policies" says that you should "seek
- standards that establish maximum acreage, " and
- then it continues you should "review and amend
- other standards." It gives you all great ideas of

- things to do, but I would say rather than just
- 2 seek new standard or review and amend existing
- 3 standards, the plan should right here and there
- 4 actually define those standards to accomplish the
- 5 goals.
- I support the standards described by the
- 7 Planning Area 4 Committee, specifically no more
- 8 than one institution per block, no more than one
- 9 acre in total area, and no further expansion of
- 10 total land use.
- 11 Thank you very much for this time
- 12 tonight.
- 13 CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: Thank you for your
- 14 comments, Ms. Timmick.
- Let's see, next on my list is Nick Jones
- of 9907 Lambertina Lane. Nick, are you there?
- MR. JONES: (inaudible) can you hear me?
- 18 CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: Yep, we can.
- 19 Welcome.
- MR. JONES: Thank you. So thank you,
- 21 Mr. Chairman and respected members of the board.
- I am Nick Jones, a junior from Thomas S. Wootton

- 1 High School. And I am advocating not only on
- behalf of myself, but for my fellow students and
- 3 the effort to retain Rockshire parking for Wootton
- 4 students.
- 5 Students rely on these spots day-in and
- 6 day-out for so many reasons. Personally, my
- 7 parents are separated and my father lives out of
- 8 the district, making driving a necessity.
- 9 Moreover, my mother, who lives in the district,
- 10 lives in a neighborhood called The Willows, which
- 11 from my house is exactly two and a half miles.
- 12 That's two and a half miles and the county does
- 13 not offer a single bus to my neighborhood since
- 14 part of the neighborhood is within Montgomery
- County's two-mile range that they say is perfectly
- 16 fine for walking distance.
- With both of my parents working
- 18 full-time and the inability to drive myself for
- the first two years of school, I was forced to
- walk through frigidly icy days to downpours that
- 21 flood the streets. Now that I'm finally a junior
- with my license, I thought those days were over

- until I heard about the county's decision to
- 2 possibly take away the Rockshire parking.
- 3 Rockshire parking would not only allow me to drive
- 4 myself, but drive others who haven't been given
- 5 the opportunity to get a ride to school.
- 6 My only ask is that if you aren't going
- <sup>7</sup> to supply the transportation, at least supply the
- 8 parking so those fortunate enough can drive those
- 9 who can't. Sorry, those who either do not have
- their license or cannot get it for one reason or
- 11 another. We deserve our spots.
- I want to thank you guys for your time
- $^{13}$  and your effort. Bye.
- 14 CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: Thank you, Nick. We
- 15 appreciate your comments about the parking and the
- <sup>16</sup> nice words for our effort.
- The next person I have, Kevin Zaletsky.
- 18 Kevin, are you online?
- MR. ZALETSKY: Yeah, hi. Can you hear
- 20 me?
- 21 CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: Yep, we can.
- MR. ZALETSKY: Okay, great. Well, thank

- 1 you very much.
- 2 CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: Go ahead and
- 3 welcome.
- 4 MR. ZALETSKY: Yeah, pardon me for that
- 5 technical difficulty.
- 6 CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: No problem.
- 7 MR. ZALETSKY: So, my name's Kevin
- 8 Zaletsky. I live at 101 North Street. I've been
- 9 a Rockville resident for more than 16 years. Most
- of that time I've been an active member of the
- West End Citizens Association, to include serving
- 12 as a member of the Planning Area 4 Neighborhood
- 13 Planning Committee for the last four years.
- 14 Tonight I wanted to address the need to include
- policy in the Neighborhood Plan to prevent the
- 16 encroachment of too many or too large of
- institutions into the neighborhoods.
- 18 As you know, Planning Area 4 is one of
- the oldest neighborhoods in Rockville, has more
- historic structures and districts than any other.
- You walk down our streets, you're met by a
- 22 progression of largely single-family homes that

- invite children to play on the sidewalks,
- 2 neighbors to converse as they walk their dogs, and
- a general sense of peace away from urban
- 4 congestion.
- By contrast, most of us have experienced
- 6 walking in towns where residential streets have
- <sup>7</sup> become islands of individual houses squeezed
- 8 amongst nonresidential buildings that dominate
- <sup>9</sup> them. These streets have lost irrevocably the
- 10 cohesiveness and friendliness of a residential
- 11 community.
- Over time, Planning Area 4 has amassed a
- greater percentage of land devoted to institutions
- than almost any other neighborhood in Rockville.
- Due to their convenience locations, the areas of
- budding Highway 270 at West Montgomery Avenue and
- 17 Falls Road are particularly at risk. In these
- 18 areas institutions occupy more than half the
- 19 available land. The residential character of
- these neighborhoods is already significantly
- 21 compromised.
- One of only 10 primary guiding

- 1 principles delineated in our Neighborhood Plan
- 2 states, "Limit the expansion of commercial and
- 3 institutional uses." This principle is not
- 4 arbitrary. It was drawn directly from a
- 5 comprehensive neighborhood survey conducted in
- 6 2016. In this survey our neighborhoods
- overwhelmingly, more than 80 percent of 500
- 8 households that responded, indicated that they
- 9 opposed replacing residences with commercial and
- 10 institutional uses.
- In that same survey, when neighbors were
- 12 asked what do you like least about your
- neighborhood, traffic was the number one response.
- 14 Without appropriate limitations on their number
- and size, institutions will continue to add more
- parked cars and traffic to our already congested
- 17 streets.
- Our neighborhoods are protected from
- commercial expansion through land use designations
- and zoning. Similar protections do not exist for
- institutions which enter the neighborhoods one at
- 22 a time via special exceptions with guidelines that

- <sup>1</sup> are largely arbitrary and subjective.
- 2 Currently, there's no limit on the total
- 3 land that can be used for institutions or other
- 4 limitations on an institution's size or footprint.
- 5 When considered one at a time, most institutions
- 6 appear reasonable are approved. But together,
- 7 however, too many institutions or excessively
- 8 large ones threaten to destroy the integrity of
- 9 Planning Area 4 as a residential neighborhood.
- Rockville neighbors take great pride in
- the institutions that currently exist in our
- 12 neighborhoods. These churches, schools, shelters,
- 13 nursing homes, museums, and many other services
- 14 grew organically with our community and are part
- of the rich tapestry of our lives. They have a
- scale and size that harmonizes with the
- 17 residential structures around them, were built to
- 18 serve the immediate community, not as a draw to
- 19 significant volumes of transient traffic from
- other locations. Reasonable limitations on the
- 21 expansion of the number and size of institutions
- 22 can keep these cherished neighborhood services

- 1 from becoming our greatest neighborhood threats.
- We've prepared draft policies regarding
- institutions that we recommend for inclusion in
- 4 the plan. Hope that you'll support the need for
- 5 this policy to preserve Planning Area 4's historic
- 6 and residential character. Thank you very much.
- <sup>7</sup> I appreciate it.
- 8 CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: Thank you, Mr.
- <sup>9</sup> Zaletsky. And I have a question for you, if
- 10 that's okay.
- MR. ZALETSKY: Sure, of course.
- 12 CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: And in a way I
- apologize because it just popped into my head and
- 14 I believe others have spoken in a similar vein as
- you just did and one the same topic. So, anyone
- listening, you know, you can always send written
- testimony. But I do want to clarify on what I've
- 18 been hearing.
- So, it seems that some people have
- spoken out against the advancement or
- 21 proliferation of institutions in Planning Area 4.
- 22 My question is, does that mean that you would

- 1 support a reduction? So, if institutions over
- time were to change use and become residential or
- 3 housing, would that be something that you're also
- 4 in favor of or is it just that you are okay with
- 5 the existing amount, but would like to see -- not
- 6 see it expand.
- 7 MR. ZALETSKY: Sure. So, speaking from
- 8 the discussions that we had in the Planning Area 4
- 9 Committee, you know, an underlying theme has
- always been that we'd be happy to further return
- to, you know, to residences of any of the
- 12 properties. So, and I think the underlying zoning
- for a lot of these institutions is single-family
- 14 residential. So, if they were to leave, we would
- be (technical inaudible).
- 16 CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: Thank you very much.
- 17 Appreciate it.
- MR. ZALETSKY: No problem. Thank you.
- 19 CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: You're welcome. The
- next speaker I have on the list is Rhoda
- Ndjoukouo, if I've said that correctly, of 10505
- 22 Bounty Cove Court, Gaithersburg.

- MS. NDJOUKOUO: Hi. Can you hear me?
- 2 CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: Hello. Yes, we can.
- 3 Welcome.
- 4 MS. NDJOUKOUO: Okay. Good evening,
- 5 Chair, members, and people of the board. My name
- 6 is Rhoda Ndjoukouo and I'm here on behalf of
- 7 Wootton High School Committee and I'm also part of
- 8 Wootton SGA; I'm secretary. Thank you so much for
- 9 having me and this opportunity to speak out and
- share my views about the Rockshire planning.
- So, the Rockshire parking lot means a
- lot to us Wootton students. You know, as Wootton
- 13 students in the Wootton community we park there a
- 14 lot, like, for school and for after school, as
- they say. For me as a senior and junior, you
- know, we have internships and interviews we go to
- in and out during school and after school and we
- 18 need these parking lots because our school parking
- 19 lots aren't big enough to fit all our students
- that have licenses, so we really need --
- 21 Rockshire's really there for us to park.
- Also, as SGA, we also hold all sorts of

- 1 events, like after-school events, like dances and
- 2 stuff like that, and we need our students to come
- and, you know, be able to park their cars and be
- 4 like, you know, having to show that they have a
- 5 place to park to come to these school events.
- And, you know, parking can also seem
- 7 like we don't want to -- we want to have Rockshire
- 8 there so students won't have to, like, park in the
- 9 neighborhoods next to Rockshire, so they'll have
- 10 parking at Rockshire to part at.
- So, yeah, I hope you guys, you know,
- take us into consideration while planning and you
- 13 guys, you know, think of us students because this
- 14 parking does really mean a lot to us and parking
- here, and taking this away would really be hard
- 16 for us to have a place to park at school because
- we do have the right to park somewhere and attend
- 18 school. And again, if these places -- if the
- transportation's not provided, we need at least
- 20 parking for these licensed students to, you know,
- 21 park at and go to school.
- Thank you so much for your time. And,

- 1 yeah, thank you.
- 2 CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: Thank you, Rhoda,
- <sup>3</sup> for taking the time to provide us your comments.
- 4 MS. NDJOUKOUO: Mm-hmm.
- 5 CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: The next person on
- 6 my list is Nancy Pickard of 29 Courthouse Square.
- 7 And Nancy is representing Peerless Rockville, so
- 8 will have five minutes of time. Nancy, are you
- 9 online with us?
- MS. PICKARD: I am. Can you hear me?
- 11 CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: Yep, we can.
- 12 Welcome and go ahead. You have five minutes.
- MS. PICKARD: All right, great. Thank
- 14 you, Chairman Littlefield, and greetings to all
- the members of the Planning Commission.
- I'm Nancy Pickard, but I am speaking to
- you tonight as executive director of Peerless
- 18 Rockville Historic Preservation. I welcome the
- opportunity to address you this evening and we are
- happy to provide input on Volume II of the Draft
- 21 Comprehensive Plan, and express our appreciation
- of your role in the Comprehensive Master Plan

- 1 process and for our inclusion and involvement in
- it, as well. This is an extremely complex,
- detailed, and vitally important document and we
- 4 commend the staff for their many, many hours, in
- <sup>5</sup> fact years of hard work.
- 6 Peerless Rockville is particularly
- 7 pleased to see the inclusion of plans and goals
- 8 for some of our most significant historic
- <sup>9</sup> properties. We will be submitting a detailed
- written response to Volume II, but tonight I will
- present some general comments that are applicable
- in certain focus areas and citywide.
- We have fully understanding that this
- 14 plan was designed to guide future growth in the
- city and, as such, it acts as a tool to guide
- 16 planning for continuity, change, and growth as
- 17 stated in Land Use Policy 1 in Volume I. To meet
- 18 future growth and community needs the plan targets
- areas for new residential housing types with
- higher density and new zoning. The change in
- growth areas are highlighted throughout the plan.
- Tonight we would like to bring a bit of attention

- 1 to areas not explicitly targeted for growth,
- 2 particularly our historic and older residential
- 3 communities.
- We note that nine planning areas report
- <sup>5</sup> residents' concerns for preserving the character
- of their single-family residential neighborhood.
- 7 Issues such as mansionization, the renovation or
- 8 replacement of original homes with structures that
- 9 dwarf the community, also appear to be a concern.
- 10 Yet these citizen concerns accompany a
- 11 Draft Comprehensive Plan that emphasizes
- multi-family housing development, redevelopment,
- and plans to permit an accessory dwelling unit on
- every property. We see little in the way of
- 15 concrete regulations or policies for protecting
- existing community character and/or the settings
- <sup>17</sup> for historic properties.
- Neighborhood character encompasses
- various aspects of site and environment reflecting
- the shape and size of buildings, materials,
- 21 craftsmanship, spaces features. Preserving this
- character refers to more than simply architecture.

- 1 Although existing and long-established building
- 2 types and patterns are central, the alignments of
- <sup>3</sup> buildings, the relationships to streets and
- 4 sidewalks, tree planting, accessory buildings,
- 5 U-sheds (phonetic), and landscaping all contribute
- 6 to the character that creates neighborhood
- <sup>7</sup> identity. Changes to neighborhood character in
- 8 historic and conservation districts requires
- 9 sensitivity, but these features remain important
- to all neighborhoods throughout the city.
- We note that in some areas, such as Area
- 4, there is increasing pressure from development
- 13 and encroachment of nonresidential offices and
- 14 growing institutions. Concrete regulations and
- guidelines need to be put in place to ensure
- 16 protection of our existing communities, and we
- call upon the Planning Commission to strengthen
- 18 these protections, particularly from expanding
- office, institutional, and retail growth. One
- opportunity to respond to citizens' concerns lies
- in the implementation of neighborhood design
- 22 guidelines, documents that will establish

- 1 architectural standards and direct us within the
- 2 city's unique neighborhood.
- Peerless Rockville wants to express
- 4 strong reservations about the impacts of Land Use
- 5 Policy 2.3, which permits an ADU on every
- 6 residential property in the city, particularly
- 7 when resident feedback strongly states a
- 8 preference to preserve the character of those
- 9 single-unit, detached residential housing. This
- policy is currently unclear, lacks specifics, and
- 11 appears to disproportionately affect older areas
- of the city already facing development pressures
- 13 and other impacts. While Peerless Rockville
- 14 agrees in concept with ADUs and supports increased
- 15 affordable housing and missing middle housing,
- 16 permitting blanket ADUs will increase housing, but
- offers no guarantees regarding affordability. We
- believe the community should be provided with more
- detailed guidelines and policies before permitting
- such a monumental change to Rockville's
- <sup>21</sup> neighborhoods.
- The health and vitality of Rockville

- 1 Town Center remains a pressing issue in the city.
- 2 Proposed increases in retail in an area where
- 3 retail currently struggles requires careful
- 4 decision-making. Redevelopment plans on North
- 5 Washington Street abutting established
- 6 neighborhood must be sensitive to the size and
- <sup>7</sup> scale and character. We hope to see the
- 8 redevelopment in Area 1 that focuses on commercial
- <sup>9</sup> vibrancy and connection between Town Center and
- 10 neighborhoods across 355, which will increase
- 11 accessibility to business and safe travel north
- 12 and east in an area where current retail space
- offers a fruitful mixed-use development rather
- than westward towards neighborhoods and
- single-family housing.
- I know I'm about out of time, so I have
- one last thought and that is just that we really
- do appreciate the acknowledgement of needed
- 19 research and publicity of existing preservation
- districts as well as better policies. And we are
- very encouraged to see future intentions for King
- Farm, Lincoln High School, and new boundaries for

- 1 Dawson Farm Pack -- Park. Sorry.
- 2 CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: That's okay.
- MS. PICKARD: Thank you so much for
- 4 listening tonight.
- 5 CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: Thank you, Ms.
- 6 Pickard. Much appreciate your comments on behalf
- of Peerless Rockville.
- 8 The next speaker that I have is Brian
- 9 Shipley at 211 South Washington Street, Rockville.
- 10 Brian, are you with us? Are you connected?
- MR. SHIPLEY: Can you hear me?
- 12 CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: Yep, yep, we can.
- 13 Welcome.
- MR. SHIPLEY: Good evening. My name is
- 15 Brian Shipley and I'm providing testimony on
- 16 Planning Area 4. I've been an officer, either
- president or vice president, of the West End
- 18 Citizens Association for more than two years and
- 19 participated in the biweekly meetings with the
- 20 city staff to finalize the Planning Area 4
- Neighborhood Plan in 2018 and '19.
- I want to make sure that the Planning

- 1 Commission is aware that the development of the
- Planning Area 4 plan has been a community effort
- from the ground up. We recognize that our 1989
- 4 Neighborhood Plan was sorely out of date and as an
- 5 appendix to the Master Plan was largely a lost
- 6 document. It was rarely referenced. We knew that
- <sup>7</sup> the future of our neighborhood depended on having
- 8 a neighborhood plan that was recognized as policy
- 9 by everyone: Developers, government officials,
- <sup>10</sup> and residents.
- 11 Throughout our own planning process we
- have sought to build out plan on the views and
- values of the residents. And to accomplish this,
- $^{14}$  we surveyed the households in the West End. Once
- the survey was complete and to ensure our planning
- 16 process remained public, we discussed the status
- of our plan at monthly WECA meetings and at our
- annual general membership meetings that are open
- 19 to all residents. So, before these public
- hearings, residents have had many opportunities to
- 21 express their views and shape our Neighborhood
- 22 Plan.

- 1 As Rockville continues to grow and
- become an urban center, we knew how the residents
- of the Planning Area 4 feel about preserving the
- 4 character of the neighborhood. And as we have
- 5 heard from others who have testified this evening,
- 6 Planning Area 4 residents overwhelmingly desire to
- 7 preserve the single-family residential
- 8 neighborhood that exists today. The survey data
- 9 supports residents' desires. We knew our
- Neighborhood Plan needed to be clear and provide
- 11 protections that do not currently exist.
- 12 As Rockville is urbanizing, pressure to
- expand commercial and institutional uses into the
- 14 neighborhood is increasing. Communities with HOAs
- have covenants that protect them from this
- happening. Planning Area 4 has none. We hope
- that you will support the protections incorporated
- into our Draft Plan and will support the
- 19 additional policies for institutions, open spaces
- in historic districts, and freestanding accessory
- 21 dwelling units.
- Our new neighborhoods with HOAs have far

- 1 greater protections from traffic and the
- encroachment of nonresidential uses. This has put
- more traffic on our streets and an unbalanced
- 4 pressure for development in Planning Area 4 and
- other older neighborhoods. Through our
- 6 Neighborhood Plan and the proposed additional
- 7 policies we're hoping to preserve our existing
- 8 residential character through increased
- 9 protections and leveling the playing field with
- 10 HOAs.
- 11 Thank you very much.
- 12 CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: Thank you, Mr.
- 13 Shipley, for your comments.
- The next person, I believe we skipped
- one person, so we are at Hyun Kim. Hyun, are you
- online?
- MS. KIM: Yes, I am.
- 18 CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: Hello and welcome.
- 19 You have three minutes.
- MS. KIM: Thank you.
- 21 CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: You're welcome.
- MS. KIM: Good evening. Thank you for

- the opportunity to address you today on behalf of
- the Korean Presbyterian Church of Rockville. We
- 3 are located at 800 Hurley Avenue, next to the
- 4 Rockshire Shopping Center.
- 5 My name is Hyun Kim and I have been a
- 6 member of the church for the past 13 years. And
- <sup>7</sup> I'm speaking to you today because we appreciate
- 8 being included in the plan as a consideration and
- <sup>9</sup> we needed to impart on this Planning Commission
- 10 how we will be directly impacted by its decisions
- and recommendations. The very existence and
- continued operations of the church will be
- determined by how the redevelopment will take into
- 14 account our church's need for additional parking
- 15 spaces.
- 16 From its inception, the Rockshire
- community provided for a religious institutional
- presence. In 1980, Temple Beth Ami built the
- $^{19}$  synagogue at 800 Hurley Avenue. And as a
- synagogue, clearly met a need of the community.
- 21 It grew and soon needed to expand. In 1986,
- Temple Beth Ami remodeled to expand the building

- and, in doing so, did not have enough parking
- 2 spaces to accommodate its growing congregation.
- From that time, it entered into a
- 4 license agreement with then-leaseholder GFS. GFS
- 5 leased and operated the Giant in the shopping
- 6 center next to the synagogue and granted use of
- <sup>7</sup> the 40 parking spaces on its parking lot at no
- 8 cost. These parking spaces were to bused in
- 9 conjunction with the Rockshire swimming pool, who
- had been using the same spaces since 1977.
- Then in 1998, our church, KPCR, took
- over occupying the synagogue and moved into the
- neighborhood and have been calling it home for the
- 14 past 22 years. Since then, we have opened our
- doors to meets the needs of the community when
- 16 able. The community has in the past used our
- church to hold meetings and we allow Wootton High
- 18 School students to park in front of our building.
- Our church bought the building only with
- the understanding that we were going to be able to
- use the additional parking spaces. Without the
- 22 accommodation of these additional parking spaces,

- our church will not be able to operate as the
- 2 limited spaces in front of the building will not
- 3 be sufficient to accommodate the congregation and,
- 4 in effect, maintain a permit to keep its door
- 5 open.
- Since 1977, the additional spaces that
- <sup>7</sup> GFS leased free of charge allowed for the
- 8 community to provide a necessary service. The
- 9 additional parking spaces are vital to not just
- the continued operation of our church, but also
- 11 for the continued presence of the swimming pool
- 12 and assisting in alleviating the overcrowding and
- meeting the needs of our high school students, as
- 14 you've heard so many from today. Therefore, we
- 15 ask that you ensure desperately needed parking
- when redeveloping the Rockshire community.
- 17 Thank you for your attention and
- 18 consideration.
- 19 CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: Thank you, Hyun, for
- your comments. We appreciate those.
- The next four people on my list are
- 22 apparently not present, although I was advised

- that we do have one more person who would like to
- 2 -- who's online and would like to speak. It's
- 3 Kaitlyn (phonetic), but I don't have a last name
- 4 and I'm not sure if -- Kaitlyn, are you here?
- 5 MS. McGUIRL: It looks like mine was
- 6 unmuted, but this is Christine McGuirl.
- 7 CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: Oh, okay. So, I
- 8 don't have -- Christine, I don't have you on my
- 9 list, but I think that's -- I'm not -- oh, yes,
- you were signed up earlier and you're now here.
- 11 So, you're with Federal Realty Investment Trust?
- MS. McGUIRL: Yes.
- 13 CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: Okay. Well, go
- $^{14}$  ahead then and welcome. And sorry for the bit of
- 15 confusion, but --
- MS. McGUIRL: Thank you so much.
- 17 CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: Thank you and you
- 18 have three minutes.
- MS. McGUIRL: So, my name is Christine
- McGuirl. I'm a development director with Federal
- 21 Realty Investment Trust, the owner of 12 North
- 22 Washington Street. And as you know, Federal

- 1 Realty is also the owner of a large portion of
- 2 Town Square and thus we have a particular interest
- in ensuring the long-term viability and vitality
- 4 of the Town Center and the surrounding area. This
- 5 goal, however, is a shared goal, one which is in
- 6 the best interest of the city, the residents, and
- <sup>7</sup> the visitors to downtown Rockville.
- I'm here this evening to testify in
- 9 support of the Draft Comprehensive Plan
- 10 recommendations to rezone the property to MXCD.
- We echo the sentiments of our neighbor, Steve
- 12 VanGrack, who you heard from two weeks ago during
- the September 9th public hearing. The 12 North
- Washington property is currently improved with
- 37,000 square feet of retail that for many years,
- well before COVID, has struggled to survive.
- 17 Surface parking fronts the building on North
- Washington Street and West Middle Lane, making it
- difficult to create an appealing streetscape.
- The zoning change in accordance with the
- 21 Comprehensive Plan recommendation will help
- 22 encourage the redevelopment of the property as

- well as the surrounding properties that share the
- same recommendation, and provide needed
- 3 residential uses. These residential uses will in
- 4 turn help to support the Town Center.
- Just over a year ago, ULI conducted an
- 6 assessment of Town Center with the goal of
- 7 providing meaningful recommendations to strengthen
- 8 the area's vitality. One of the specific
- 9 questions that ULI panel posed was, is the
- development density and land use mix, both
- existing and expected, sufficient to support a
- 12 strong retail environment?
- The ULI panel's answer was clear: The
- density in the Town Center should be increased
- without compromising character. The panel
- 16 recognized that a critical mass was just that,
- critical to supporting the Town Center.
- 18 A number of years ago, Federal Realty
- evaluated redeveloping 12 North Washington
- 20 property to provide multi- family housing, but it
- was not economically viable under the existing
- 22 MXNC-MXT zoning. As the Draft Comprehensive Plan

- 1 recommendation for the west side of North
- Washington Street recognized, the development
- 3 standards of the MXCD zone allow for sufficient
- 4 density to make residential development feasible
- 5 in a manner compatible with surrounding areas.
- 6 We encourage the Planning Commission to
- <sup>7</sup> support the recommendations of the Comprehensive
- 8 Plan for this area. Thank you.
- 9 CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: Thank you, Ms.
- 10 McGuirl. Appreciate your testimony about the Town
- 11 Center.
- 12 I think that exhausts my list of
- pre-registered participants. I'm going to ask
- 14 city staff if there's anyone else that's signed on
- since or wasn't here and is now here and would
- 16 like to speak.
- Bonita? Clark?
- MR. LARSON: I just asked Bonita the
- 19 same thing. I'm not sure.
- BONITA: I'm sorry. Yes, everyone has
- $^{21}$  spoken. There was one --
- 22 CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: Okay.

- BONITA: -- who called in, but she's
- <sup>2</sup> already accounted for.
- CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: Okay. So,
- 4 everybody's accounted for. Well, then I guess
- 5 that concludes our second and final public
- 6 testimony on the Comprehensive Plan, Volume II:
- 7 Planning Areas, at least the virtual testimony.
- 8 But for all those listening, I'll repeat what I
- 9 said at the beginning. Our public record, we
- voted at our last meeting to keep our public
- record open until October 7th, 5 p.m., I believe,
- 12 so that's another couple weeks to provide us
- testimony in writing, and we are actually
- encouraging that. We prefer that simply because
- we're not in normal times and we're doing an okay
- job, I think, right now with our virtual Planning
- 17 Commission meetings, but certainly it would be
- beneficial to have -- to make sure we've heard
- 19 from everybody to have that testimony in writing,
- $^{20}$  as well.
- So, with that --
- BONITA: I'm sorry to interrupt you. I

- 1 notice that we did have one person just -- it
- looks like they jumped on, Patrick Woodward, I
- 3 think his last name is. I don't have the --
- 4 Woodward, yes. He was on the list before, but
- wasn't available (technical inaudible).
- 6 CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: Let's -- we'd like
- <sup>7</sup> to hear your testimony and your comments. And you
- 8 can have three minutes, which is the usual for
- <sup>9</sup> individuals. Are you here?
- MR. WOODWARD: Can you hear me?
- 11 CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: Yes, we can.
- 12 Welcome.
- MR. WOODWARD: Okay. Thank you very
- much. I just was able to log on.
- 15 CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: Okay.
- MR. WOODWARD: All right.
- 17 CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: Please proceed.
- <sup>18</sup> Yep.
- MR. WOODWARD: Good evening. My name is
- Patrick Woodward and I live at 111 North Van Buren
- 21 Street. My testimony will address the overarching
- need for the Planning Area 4 Neighborhood Plan to

- 1 preserve and protect the character of the
- <sup>2</sup> neighborhood as a predominantly single-family,
- 3 detached residential.
- In the mid-1980s, I had the privilege of
- 5 participating in the neighborhood planning process
- 6 that ultimately led to the adoption of the 1989
- 7 Neighborhood Plan for Planning Area 4. Then as
- 8 now, the residents expressed their views in a
- 9 comprehensive survey. Then as now, the residents
- 10 voiced their concern over the encroachment into
- the neighborhood of nonresidential development.
- 12 The residents also indicated their strong
- 13 preference for maintaining the single-family
- 14 residential character of the neighborhood.
- Today we are faced with a new threat.
- 16 The proposal to allow accessory dwelling units and
- 17 freestanding structures on lots with single-family
- detached dwellings will eventually destroy the
- character of the neighborhood that the residents
- expressly want to be preserved. I concur with the
- reasons given by Margaret Magner for disallowing
- 22 ADUs in freestanding structures and will not

- 1 repeat them here.
- I would like to add, however, that the
- 3 economic pressure to build ADUs will fall equally
- 4 on developers and homeowners. It is beyond
- 5 question that the value of a single-family
- 6 residential lot will be increased by the potential
- <sup>7</sup> addition of a standalone ADU. What homeowner
- 8 would not take advantage of this increased value
- <sup>9</sup> when selling his or her property. Similarly, a
- 10 purchaser who pays a higher price will seek to
- 11 recoup that expense by building an ADU.
- Finally, the state of Maryland is
- 13 required by law to assess every parcel of land at
- 14 its highest and best use. The allowance of two
- residential units on one lot will eventually lead
- to a higher assessment and higher real estate
- 17 taxes.
- In conclusion, I respectfully request
- that you preserve and protect the residential
- 20 character of Planning Area 4 by prohibiting any
- 21 accessory dwelling unit in a standalone structure
- on a lot with a single-family, detached dwelling.

In this way the voice of the residents will be 1 2 Thank you very much. heard. 3 CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: Thank you, Mr. Woodward. And I'm glad you finally made it. 4 5 were just about to wrap up, so thanks again for 6 your comments. 7 I assume we are wrapping up. 8 MR. WOODWARD: Okay, (inaudible). 9 CHAIR LITTLEFIELD: Yep, have a good evening. So, I'll ask staff, is that -- do we 10 have anybody else? One last chance. Okay. Then 11 12 that does conclude our public testimony, our 13 meeting agenda item. 14 (Whereupon, the PROCEEDINGS were 15 adjourned.) 16 17 18 19 20 21 22

1 CERTIFICATE OF NOTARY PUBLIC 2 I, Carleton J. Anderson, III do hereby 3 certify that the forgoing electronic file when 4 originally transmitted was reduced to text at my 5 direction; that said transcript is a true record 6 of the proceedings therein referenced; that I am neither counsel for, related to, nor employed by 8 any of the parties to the action in which these 9 proceedings were taken; and, furthermore, that I am neither a relative or employee of any attorney 10 or counsel employed by the parties hereto, nor 11 12 financially or otherwise interested in the outcome 13 of this action. 14 15 Carleton J. Anderson, III 16 17 (Signature and Seal on File) 18 19 Notary Public in and for the Commonwealth of 20 Virginia Commission No. 351998 21 22 Expires: November 30, 2020